

computer automatically identifies the device connected through the USB cable and activates a data fetching software. When the operator selects, with a mouse, one of the functions displayed on the display of the computer, the computer issues a command to the CPU 220 through the USB connector 244 and the USB module 242, and, based on such command, the CPU 220 reads the designated data from the flash memory 234 and transfers them to the computer.

10 The conventional digital camera utilizes, as the memory means for the taken images, not only the flash memory incorporated in the main body but also a detachable CF card utilizing a flash memory or a hard disk. The memory capacity of such external memory medium is more or less limited though it is recently increasing, it is necessary to transfer the stored data to another information memory device thereby securing the empty area. However, it is cumbersome to connect and activate the computer merely for the data backup, since the computer generally requires a long time for activation.

25 Even in case of backup of the taken image data in the computer, the data transferred to the computer are merely a copy of the image data. In case of reproducing the taken image again in the digital camera, there is required an operation of returning the taken image data (for example data of 1600 × 1200

pixels (about 700 kB)) from the computer to the flash memory 234, or an operation of reducing the data of 1600 x 1200 pixels to data of 640 x 480 pixels (about 35 kB) by an image conversion tool in the computer prior to transfer to the digital camera. The former operation reduces the empty area of the flash memory 234 while the latter operation involves a cumbersome operation.

There is recently proposed a receiving member (called cradle) having functions not only of charging the rechargeable battery 238 but also of transferring the data stored in the flash memory 234 to the computer in response to the placement of the main body of the camera in a predetermined position or the start of charging of the rechargeable battery 238. However such receiving member is merely a charging device unless the computer is activated, and is not to dispense with the procedure of activating the computer.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to resolve all the aforementioned drawbacks or at least one thereof.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an external storage device for an image pickup apparatus, capable of resolving the aforementioned drawbacks.

The above-mentioned objects can be attained, according to the present invention, that is, the present invention is directed to an external storage device which is connected to an image pickup apparatus provided with a first image storage medium capable of storing plural taken images and image display means and adapted for backup of image information stored in said first image storage medium, the device comprising:

- 10 a second image storage medium capable of storing plural image information;
- a connection detecting unit for detecting the connection with said image pickup apparatus;
- a reception unit for accepting a backup instruction for the taken image by a user; and
- 15 transfer means for writing predetermined taken image information read from said first image storage medium into said second image storage medium and erasing said predetermined taken image information from said first image storage medium according to a
- 20 detection output of said connection detecting means and an output of said reception means.

Still another object of the present invention is to enable confirmation of the data transferred to an external storage device, later in the image pickup apparatus.

Still another object of the present invention is not excessively use the memory of the image pickup